

*Joint Trip includes stops following paths of injured soldiers*

(Washington, DC) -

With a desire to better understand medical care systems available to injured troops overseas, Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) spent the past week in Afghanistan and Germany, returning to the United States today. As a member of the House Veterans Committee, Halvorson along with other members of the committee, traveled to a number of locations to explore the military medical care system while visiting with military leaders and medical personnel. A bipartisan effort, the group sought a greater understanding of necessary infrastructure, operations and support for the success and health of our troops in Afghanistan.

The Congresswoman especially enjoyed visiting with troops on the ground and in medical facilities.

"I can't begin to express how honored I am for the opportunity to visit our service men and women in Afghanistan. All of us personally thanked them for what they do for our Country," said Halvorson. "Our soldiers give so much of themselves to preserve our freedom and security - we must make sure we're there to take care of them if they need us."

While there, group also had the chance to speak with various commanders in Afghanistan and visited various sites such as a military hospital in Arifjan, Kuwait; the United States Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan; a hospital complex in Bagram, Afghanistan; a Forward Operating Base and medical facility in Jalalabad, Afghanistan; a medical facility in Kalagush, Afghanistan; Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, and Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany.

"It was very beneficial and informative to see the military medical care system for ourselves, said Halvorson. "Our troops deserve the best we can give, so do our veterans - and I will continue to work toward that goal."

The highlight of the trip for Halvorson was the presentation of letters and cards to soldiers from 11th district students at Seneca Grade School - North Campus and St. Paul's Lutheran School in Kankakee.

"Those letters and cards meant so much to the soldiers," said Halvorson. "I want the students to know that they really made a difference."

Although her first trip to Afghanistan, Halvorson felt a personal tie there as well. In 2008, her stepson, Jay Bush, Army Special Forces was injured in Afghanistan. Much of the route traveled mirrored Jay's experience after he was injured - and while in Landstuhl, his doctors and other medical staff met with Halvorson.

"I was very impressed with the medical staff and the care they give to our injured soldiers," said Halvorson. "My husband Jim and I know this very well because of the road we traveled with Jay. Thanks to these professionals, our son is doing so much better. It was an honor to be able to personally say thank you to those who helped with his care and assure them that good health care for our soldiers and veterans is a priority".